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[From The Leavenworth Medical Herald for October, 1867.]

CONVEYANCE OF CHOLERA

FROM IRELAND TO CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES INDIAN TERRITORY, IN 1832.

By John C. Peters, M.D., of New York.

From Dr. R. Nelson's account we select the following: Early in the spring of 1832 the following infected vessels arrived at Quebec, Canada: The ship Robert sailed from Cork on May 14th, and had 10 deaths from cholera; the Constantia, April 28th, from Limerick, with 29 deaths; the Elizabeth, May 28th, from Dublin, with 17 deaths: the Carrick, from Dublin, June 3d, with 42 deaths; ship Brubus, May 18th, from Liverpool, with 81 deaths.

All these ships and their passengers were quarantined at Grosse Isle, a few miles below Quebec. On June 7th the St. Lawrence steamer Voyageur conveyed a load of these emigrants and their baggage, some to Quebec and the majority to Montreal on the 10th.

The first cases of cholera in America occurred in emigrant boarding houses in Quebec on the 8th, and the same pest steamboat, the Voyageur, landed persons dead and dying of cholera at Montreal, a distance of 200 miles, in less than 30 hours; and over this long distance, thickly inhabited on both shores of the St. Lawrence, cholera made a single leap, without infecting a single village, or a single house between the two cities, with the following exceptions: A man picked up a mattress thrown from the Voyageur, and he and his wife died of cholera; another man fishing on the St. Lawrence was requested to bury a dead man

[n. p., 1867].

from the Voyageur, and he, his wife and nephew died. The captain of a passing boat requested an Indian to bury a man from on board; this and five other Indians were attacked and died.

The town of Three Rivers, half way between Quebec and Montreal, forbid steamers to land and escaped for a long time.

From Montreal the great influx of emigrants was forwarded away, by the Emigrant Society, as fast as they arrived, and by them the pestilence was sown at each stopping place. Kingston, Toronto and Niagara soon became affected. In the end over 4000 persons died of cholera in Montreal, and more than an equal number in Quebec.

The epidemic quickly reached Detroit in the same way. From the United States Army Report for 1832, page 81, we learn: It was at this period (June, 1832,) that Asiatic cholera made its first appearance on the northeast coast of America, and spread with fatal rapidity along the great water courses on our northern frontier, and continued west along the great lakes until in September it reached some of our military posts on the upper Mississippi. As the Sac and Fox Indians, headed by Black Hawk, were at this time in open hostility, our troops marching towards the theatre of war became exposed to the influence of the epidemic. Speaking of this event Major General Macomb, in his annual report, says: Unfortunately, however, the cholera was just at this time making its way into the United States from Canada, and infected our troops while on board the steamboats in their passage up the lakes; and such was the rapidity with which this disease spread among them that, in a few days, the whole force sent by the lakes was rendered incapable of taking the field. Some were landed, but the principal reached Chicago in a most deplorable condition. Six companies of artillery left Fortress Monroe, Virginia, in perfect health, contracted the cholera at Detroit, and reached Chicago with a loss of one out of every three men.

On page 86 we read: Fort Dearborn, near Chicago, was temporarily re-occupied during the campaign against Black Hawk in 1832, and it was here that epidemic cholera displayed its

most fatal effects among our troops. Out of 1000 men over 200 cases were admitted into hospitals in the course of 7 or 8 days. Surgeon DeCamp inclined to the opinion of its contagiousness, because previous to the arrival of the steamboat which brought the disease to Fort Dearborn, there had not been a case of disease of this kind at the fort or in the village. When these troops again marched for the Mississippi they appeared in perfect health, yet it broke out again on the way, and when the command reached the Mississippi it became as fatal as it had been at Fort Dearborn.

On page 90 we read: The garrison at Fort Niagara also suffered from epidemic cholera in 1832, when on its march towards the theatre of Indian hostilities. Having reached Detroit on the 30th of June, 1832, the troops were mustered and inspected, no man being on the sick list. On the 6th of July the first case occurred, and by the 20th 47 men, out of a company of 78, had been attacked. As regards the cause of the sudden appearance of this disease at Detroit, leaving an intermediate country of considerable extent unaffected, it was generally believed at the time that the principle of infection existed in the steamboat in which the troops were conveyed from Buffalo to Detroit, this vessel having been employed in transporting crowds of filthy foreign emigrants westward from Montreal and Quebec. The "Henry Clay," among the troops on board of which the disease also appeared, had been engaged in the same kind of service.

On page 159 we read, that it also reached Fort Crawford, on the Mississippi, two miles above the mouth of the Wisconsin; and Fort Leavenworth, on the Missouri river, about 500 miles above its confluence with the Mississippi; also, Jefferson Barracks, 10 miles below St. Louis; and Fort Gibson, on the Neosho or Grand river, in Arkansas. Our troops handed the disease over to the Indians.